

Milton and Servetus:
A Study in the Sources of Milton's
Theology

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PART I.

A. General Considerations Concerning Milton's Theology

That Milton's theology is remarkable for its independence¹ has often been noted.² Although he has something in common with the Fathers, with the Greek philosophers, with the Renaissance metaphysicians, with the Protestant reformers, and with the chief heretical sects of the Reformation, nevertheless, among them all we can nowhere find a parallel for his *system*; we cannot even find all the elements of which it is composed, nor, indeed, its chief conceptions.

Religiously, Milton is distinctly a product of the Christian Renaissance; yet he was certainly not a Calvinist, a Lutheran, a mystic, a Socinian, or an Arminian. He denied utterly the theory of absolute predestination and the final perseverance of the saints.³ The Lutherans made everything in religion depend upon a faith that rendered human reason and action quite unnecessary, if not positively evil.⁴ But Milton said:

A man may be a heretic in the truth; and if he believe things only because his pastor says so, or the Assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy.⁵

¹ A comparison of the *De Doctrina Christiana* with the *Ordinance for the Suppression of Heresies and Blasphemies*, enacted by the Presbyterian parliament of 1648, reveals the fact that had Milton's work on theology then been available five capital charges and eight involving life-imprisonment might have been brought against him.

² Cf. David Masson, *Life of Milton*, VI., 839; Denis Saurat, *La Pensée de Milton*, Paris, 1920, p. 227; Wood, *Form and Origin*, London, Ontario, 1911, pp. 28-9.

³ Cf. *Christian Doctrine*, Ch. IV.

⁴ Cf. Luther's *Confession*, in *Martin Luther*, by H. E. Jacobs, New York, 1909, pp. 439-40.

⁵ *P. W.*, II, 85.

By reason of his rampant rationalism, Milton seems to have been allied with the Socinians in thought; but he was by no means a Socinian. He made much of the metaphysics of theology, which the followers of Socinus suppressed and so abolished; he did not reject a Trinity of a kind, and rebuked the Socinians for denying the existence of the Holy Ghost.⁶ With the Quakers or Anabaptists⁷ he seems to have had much in common; but unlike these mystics, he was a rationalist, depending upon the light of that human reason which belongs to every man, and never looking for a miraculous inner light⁸ which is suddenly vouchsafed after long periods of uncertain waiting. Boehme interpreted the scripture symbolically; but Milton held close to its letter, understood in the light of individual, innate reason; furthermore, he considered participation in public life and civil obedience to civil authority the duty of every man. Finally, Milton did not belong to the Arminians, for the only point in which he agreed with them was in rejecting predestination. In all other respects they were severely orthodox; whereas Milton was heretical in practically everything.

Though Milton, as a result of his wide reading, drew from many sources, his religious system cannot be called eclectic, for it is a unity growing out of his individualistic philosophy. To understand the construction of his theology we must realize that it depends, fundamentally, if not wholly, upon a union of rationalistic and metaphysical elements, combined with a theoretically literal interpretation of scripture.⁹ When I say that Milton's theology is rationalistic, I mean that in religion he reasoned mathematically, not legalistically, and that he regarded man's innate reason as a revealer and criterion of truth; when I say that it is full of metaphysics, I mean that his whole

⁶ Cf. *P. W.*, IV. 167.

⁷ This fact has misled M. L. Bailey, in her *Milton and Jacob Boehme*, New York, 1914, to draw a parallel which does not exist. She mistakes the light of mysticism for the light of rationalism.

⁸ Cf. Boehme's *Confessions*, London, 1920, especially pp. 1-6.

⁹ Of course, Milton usually made scripture say whatever his reason told him it should. But in *theory*, he considered the letter of the Bible final. Cf. *P. W.*, IV., 115-6. We have here a long and abstruse discussion concerning the use and meaning of an article in a scriptural document. Page 173 we read: "The word *beginning* is interpreted in an active sense on the authority of Aristotle." This illustrates Milton's method.

conception of God is based upon a pantheistic theory of the universe. Yet Milton regarded the Bible as the word of God revealed through passive instruments, but subject to corruption in the hands of men.¹⁰ He brought, then, to his interpretation of scripture and Christian dogma the predilections of ardent rationalism and thorough-going pantheism. No theologian, therefore, who is not similar to Milton in these respects may be considered a significant antecedent.

One further observation should here be noted. Milton's intellect, although very strong, vigorous, and independent, was rather of the absorbing and disseminative than of the creative type. If, then, we find great and very uncommon conceptions in his theology, we may suspect that he derived them from some other thinker. We know that he went far in his search for truth; he was acquainted with hundreds of authors.¹¹ But he never had at his disposal long, quiet, contemplative years in which to formulate his own systems; he was caught in the storm and stress of affairs, busy in the haunts of men. At Horton he studied ecclesiastical history,¹² and was not, moreover, deeply interested in religion, *per se*. Accordingly, we should expect him to seize upon theological conceptions, wherever he might find them, appropriating those which harmonized with his bent of mind, scarcely conscious perhaps of his debt.

The original of Milton's peculiarly unorthodox conceptions is not to be sought among ancient authors because such rationalism, scriptural literalism, and metaphysics as we find in his system belong only to the modern age.¹³ The source, therefore, should be sought in the work of some Renaissance theologian and philosopher in whom pantheism and rationalism are combined with a Protestant reverence for the *ipsissima verba* of scripture.

The man we seek is to be found, I believe, in the person of Michael Servetus Villanovanus.

¹⁰ Cf. all of Ch. XXX, *De Doctrina Christiana*.

¹¹ In his works, Milton refers to 2200 authors as if he were intimately acquainted with them.

¹² A slight examination of his *Commonplace Book* makes this fact obvious.

¹³ As far as I know, no ancient pantheist was an orthodox Christian. Furthermore, ancient pantheism was in certain respects quite different from that of the Renaissance. For a résumé of the Renaissance philosophy, especially that of G. Bruno, cf. Windelband, *History of Philosophy*, London, 1919, 361-71.

B. *Servetus, and Milton's Probable Knowledge of Him*

Servetus (1509 or 1511–1553) is an extraordinary character; about him a whole literature has grown up—expository, biographical, controversial, and dramatic. He was a great physician, the first to discover the pulmonary circulation; he was a great geographer and philosopher, as well as a great theologian and critic of scripture. At the age of twenty or twenty-two, he published the *De Erroribus Trinitatis Libri Septem*—a revolutionary and startlingly original contribution to Christian theology. Harnack calls him the most outstanding antitrinitarian of the sixteenth century.¹⁴ He was a man remarkable for his boldness and intellectual perspicacity; and finally he was made immortal by the death he suffered, being burned at the stake by a slow fire at the instigation of Jean Calvin.

Servetus was a pantheist, a rationalist, and a strict literalist in scripture. "What distinguishes him [Servetus] from most of the Italian Antitrinitarians is that his opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity is ultimately based on pantheism."¹⁵ Furthermore, he was an unbending believer in the validity of his own reason: "The doctrine of the Trinity, he affirmed, was without warrant of Scripture and without support of reason. He ridiculed it as a piece of nonsense and a fable . . . a being who was three Gods in one was an impossible existence, he held."¹⁶ Yet Servetus was a scriptural literalist: "Servetus was the fruit of the freethinking of his time grafted upon the basal principle of Protestantism, namely the supreme and final authority of the Scriptures."¹⁷

Servetus is remarkable also in the fact that, in spite of his greatness, he never became the founder of a sect. But the reason for this is not far to seek. The orthodox church, and the founders of sects in general, require only faith—not understanding—in matters of religious doctrine. They insist upon obedience rather than comprehension. Servetus built up a great and difficult, though rational, system; and he demanded that his philosophy *be understood*. He would not coerce, but convince.

¹⁴ *Dogmengeschichte*, Freiburg, 1890, II. 664–5, footnote.

¹⁵ Harnack, *History of Dogma*, London, 1899, VII. 133, note.

¹⁶ Hunter, *The Teaching of Calvin*, 235.

¹⁷ *Ib.*, loc. cit.

Such methods and principles will not gain for a teacher any considerable popularity.

But they are the very methods and principles which would recommend him most highly to Milton. Our poet yearned to understand the difficult and the lofty. The proud individualism, the vigorous rationalism, and the profound metaphysical system of Servetus would make him most fascinating to Milton.

Milton read widely, nor did he confine himself to what was usual or orthodox. In the "Dedication" to the *Christian Doctrine* we read:

For my own part, I adhere to the Holy Scriptures alone—I follow no other heresy or sect. I had not even read any of the works of heretics, so-called, when the mistakes of those who are reckoned for orthodox, and their incautious handling of Scripture first taught me to agree with their opponents whenever those opponents agreed with Scripture.¹⁸

From this passage it may be inferred that Milton must have read many "works of the heretics, so-called," and that many of his conceptions derived from them.

Whether Milton ever read Servetus or not, it is certain that he must have known who he was, and, in a general way—by reason of the frequency of his name in current religious literature—what he thought. After the execution of Servetus, Calvin wrote a long defence of himself and his faith: in French for those who could read only the vernacular, in Latin for the learned. Beza, Calvin's understudy and successor in Geneva, wrote a well-known *Life of Calvin*. These treatises were among the handbooks of the Presbyterians by whose side Milton fought in 1641-2—it is almost impossible that he should not have known them well. In them much is said about Servetus, and from them at least a distorted conception of his teaching could be gained. A treatise against killing men for difference of opinion in matters of religion, published by Martinus Bellius in 1554, provoked Beza to a frantic reply, in which his denunciations of Servetus pass quite beyond reasonable limits. Also, throughout the fifty-one volumes of Calvin's *Commentaries*, one keeps stumbling upon the name of Servetus; it occurs in the *Institutes*. All these confused misrepresentations would only serve to stimulate a man like Milton to examine the truth at its source.

¹⁸ *P. W.*, IV. 8-9.

Servetus was also frequently mentioned by the English and Scottish Calvinists. John Knox, in his chief doctrinal disquisition—that on predestination—has much to say against Servetus and the Anabaptists, whom he assumes to be his followers. He cites a list of fourteen heretical points¹⁹ maintained by Servetus, although, of course, these scarcely represent anything actually said by him. Francis Cheynell, one of the four or five chief framers of the *Westminster Confession*, calls Servetus an Abailardus, a Samosatenus, an Arius, a Eutyches, and “the grandfather of the Socinians.”²⁰ From Cheynell we learn also that “the opinions of Abailardus, Servetus, Socinus, are already published in English in a book entitled Mr. Wotton’s defence against Mr. Walker.”²¹

Milton must have learned something—however distorted—of Servetus and his teaching through these orthodox channels, as well as from other sources. Further, the mere notoriety of Servetus—the heresiarch of the Reformation—and his execution would be no inconsiderable motive to a man like Milton to know his teaching at first hand. The *De Erroribus* was published in Dutch in 1620, and Todd says of Milton that “he drank largely perhaps from the turbid streams of the Arian and Socinian pieces published in Holland and dispersed in England.”²² Accordingly, there is no improbability in the supposition that he had a first-hand acquaintance with the *De Erroribus*. Willis says:

Servetus’ *De Erroribus Trinitatis* is generally believed to be one of the rare books but it is commonly enough met with in England. . . . There is a counterfeit edition published in Holland and only to be distinguished from the original by the paper being somewhat better and the type a shade larger. The book was never, in so far as we know, publicly condemned and burned. It was translated into Dutch (4- to

¹⁹ *Works*, Edinburgh, 1854, V. 226-7.

²⁰ *Rise, Growth, and Danger of Socinianisme*, London, 1643, p. 6. It is interesting to note here that, although there is really little connection between Socinianism and Anabaptism, Servetus was accused of being the founder of both: of the former, because of his rationalism; of the latter, because of his pantheism, which was confused with mysticism.

²¹ *Ib.*, “Introduction,” p. 3.

²² M. L. Bailey, *Milton and Jacob Boehme*, 135-6.

1620) with the epigraph: Proeft alle Dingen ende behout het goede,
1 John IV.²³

That Milton could have found this book, had he made an attempt to do so, we may consider certain. And it is a most significant fact that he was in the habit of seeking out just such books as this. We have clear evidence that he possessed a copy of Jean Bodin's *Heptaplomeres*,²⁴ a treatise setting forth a rationalistic and heretical conversation, carried on by seven men. Of Bodin's book only a few copies seem to have existed, and those precious, hard to obtain, and dangerous to possess. Queen Christina sought several years before she could obtain one. Milton must have been making diligent search for proscribed works; and he would have had less difficulty in finding, and far greater incentive for seeking, a copy of the *De Erroribus* than of the *Heptaplomeres*.

The names of Machiavel and Servetus were alike in that they called forth intense prejudice. Milton could never use the name of Machiavel to support an argument—to have done so would have blasted all hope of influence upon others—it would have been to league himself with the Arch-fiend. In the *Apology for Smectymnuus* (1642) we read: "Anger, thus freely vented, spends itself ere it break out into action, though Machiavel, whom he cites, or any other Machiavellian priest, think the contrary."²⁵

Though Milton in his published work thus uses the name of Machiavel as a term of invective to cast at his opponents, we know that in private he had no small respect for it. In the *Commonplace Book*, there are eleven distinct citations from the great Florentine,—more than from any other writer, excepting two or three historians from whom he took factual data. But from the author of *The Prince* he copied ideas, thoughts, which appear in his writings.

Our inquiry would be facilitated if we had Milton's *Index Theologicus*, to which he refers in the *Commonplace Book* and of

²³ *Servetus and Calvin*, London, 1877, *Note*, p. 78. Cf. also p. 51: "Servetus's book, everywhere sold freely in the first instance, must have been read by every one of liberal education,—though it became scarce ere long."

²⁴ L. Bredvold, "Milton and Bodin's *Heptaplomeres*," *Studies in Philology*, April, 1924.

²⁵ *P. W.*, III. 135.

which he speaks in the "Dedication" of the *Christian Doctrine*. "I was in the habit," he says, "of classing under certain heads whatever passages of Scripture occurred for extraction, to be made use of hereafter as occasion might require."²⁶ He goes on to say that he made a wide study of works on theology. In this *Index*, as in the *Commonplace Book* itself, quotations probably appeared from authors whom Milton could not have countenanced openly, and we might have found passages from writers by whom the world of his time would have been deeply scandalized. It is certain that the *Index* quoted extensively from Arminius,²⁷ and no reason appears for doubting that excerpts from Servetus were also included.

The fact that Milton nowhere mentions Servetus in his publications does not imply that he had not read him. Servetus was not then considered a martyr, but a horrible blasphemer. For an author to use his name without execration would be to condemn himself. Milton wrote with the object of convincing his readers that his own religious doctrine was the true one. With this purpose in view it was politic to appeal to accepted authority, while nothing could have been more unwise than to appeal to heretics. Accordingly, Milton in the *Christian Doctrine* mentions no unorthodox theologian; yet he often invokes St. Augustine, Calvin, and Beza, to whom he was almost diametrically opposed in all essentials. In his last tract, Milton demands toleration for Calvinists, Lutherans, Arminians, Socinians, etc.; but he did not include "Servetians" because Servetus had no body of followers. I am unable to think of any work in which Milton could have mentioned Servetus without disadvantage to his argument. It would be unreasonable, therefore, to expect such mention, so, even though he was intimately acquainted with his writings.

The *De Erroribus*, it must be remembered, is a polemical pamphlet, very much like the *Areopagitica* in spirit. But the *Christian Doctrine* is a "wholesome body of divinity" which purports to be based strictly on the scriptures; it is cold, critical, analytical; it marshals a vast array of texts; it is exceedingly

²⁶ *Ib.*, IV. 3.

²⁷ Milton borrowed many points in his complex argument against the Calvinian dogma of absolute predestination from Jacobus Arminius.

cautious, and seeks to establish only what is absolutely essential to the principal theses; it is meticulously careful not to enter the realm of imagination or of mere opinion. Milton was here on the defensive; he was conscious of the hazards of his undertaking; he realized that if he assumed anything unorthodox he could not make a favorable impression. In the *De Erroribus*, on the other hand, Servetus takes the field in magnificent and intrepid offensive, evidently believing that it was necessary merely to declare what was to him the rational truth in order to win its acceptance. Accordingly, he assumes many things that Milton devotes long discussions to prove; he sweepingly asserts much that Milton did not consider essential to saving faith, and so scarcely touched upon. The *De Erroribus* is filled with imaginative conceptions, for it is the product of magnanimous youth, while the *Christian Doctrine* is the work of experienced maturity. Therefore in seeking similarities in Milton to the imaginative conceptions of the *De Erroribus* one will not turn first to the *Christian Doctrine* but to *Paradise Lost*. Here the trammels of theological argument were replaced by poetic freedom, and the suspected theologian was freed from jealous scrutiny. We may, however, expect to find the metaphysics of *Paradise Lost* confirmed by the logic of the *De Doctrina*.

PART II.

In the following comparison, I have endeavored, so far as possible, to avoid overlapping; but, because of the inter-dependence which exists among the great elements of the Christian system, a certain amount of duplication is inevitable. The parallel I propose to draw depends, not upon verbal similarities, but upon fundamental ideas, which, both in Servetus and Milton, are few in number, clearly expressed, and, when logically arranged, form a coherent body.

Christian theology consists of a great and indissoluble quaternity of dogmas:²⁸ that of creation; that of the Incarnation; that of redemption; and that of the Trinity. We may, therefore, compare the teaching of Servetus and Milton with respect to these four doctrines.

²⁸ Cf. Emile. Saisset, "Michel Servet," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1848, XXI, 585 ff; and 817 ff.

A. *Theory of Creation*

To what extent the creation-theory of Milton and Servetus was original with them is indeed difficult to say. I know of no other modern²⁹ theologian who held it; and of course it is radically different from the orthodox idea, which maintained that God—a personal being—created the universe “out of nothing.”

In both *Paradise Lost* and *The Christian Doctrine* Milton gives a full exposition of the creation; but in the *De Erroribus* Servetus has, as we should expect, little to say about it. We do know, however, that a thorough-going pantheism—the fundamental postulate of Renaissance philosophy—lies at the basis of both men’s metaphysics. To realize this fact means much, for it precludes the universally orthodox doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. Creation, according to Milton and Servetus, brings nothing *new* into existence: a part of God is merely placed in order—under law. God is the material of the universe and the will which controls it; the Word is the energetic force which reduces Chaos to order and performs the edicts of God’s will. Chaos is

the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and notion.³⁰

This pantheism Servetus several times expresses, and frequently implies in unmistakable terms; God *is* the universe:

“All things, all creatures . . . are portions of the substance of God.”
. . . . “I have not a doubt but that this bench, this table, all you can point to around us, is of the substance of God. . . . I hold it as a general proposition that all things whatsoever are part and parcel of God, and that nature at large is His substantial manifestation.”³¹

This quotation derives from Calvin; but the following occurs in the *De Erroribus*:

²⁹ The ancient heretic Hermogenes taught a creation-theory almost identical to that of Servetus and Milton, as we learn from Tertullian and Hippolytus, who wrote against him and summarized his doctrines. (Cf. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, III. 256, ff; V. 122-3.) But pantheism with Hermogenes signified a very different thing from what it did with the Renaissance metaphysician; for he was one of the first to teach absolute predestination. (Cf. Neander, *History of the Church*, I., 617).

³⁰ *P. L.*, II, 151.

³¹ Willis, *Servetus and Calvin*, p. 330

Potest Jehovah Zebaot, sicut dixi, Jehovah Elohim, quasi dicat milites essentias, & inde prouenit, quod divinitatis nomen, nominibus angelorum est immixtum, quia eius essentia est eis immixta. Vides hic plures Deum habere essentias, non enim possunt dici plures res in una essentia, sed bene e converso: uno dico que omnium rerum essentiae est ipse Deus, & omnia sunt in ipso.³²

The creation itself was effected by means of the Word, the creating and speaking God:

Omnia per ipsum facta sunt. Omnia fecit Deus Verbo suo, id est, prima illa res per secundam. Prima illa res per secundam operabatur. . . . Omnia Verbo Dei . . . [sunt] facta. . . . Et Psalmista, Verbo Domini coeli facti sunt, quia ipse dixit & facta sunt. . . . Nec Joannes unquam excogitasset, quod Dei eloquium faceremus naturale nomen alicuius certae rei, praecipue cum ipse se referat ad eum sermonem quem Deus in principio locutus est, quando universa condidit.³³ Nam quae Paulus per Christum, Johannes per ipsum sermonum facta dicit.³⁴

We should notice also that the creation is Platonic; this Servetus insists upon time and again, under various circumstances. All things exist timelessly throughout eternity in the mind of God, but their manifestation is temporal; what has but now appeared to us existed from the beginning in God's timeless will.

Ad quae omnia respondeo, quia in Deo praedestinatio non distinguitur ab eo quod est, nec in Deo reperiuntur volebat, volet, futurum, praeteritum: sed uult hanc rem taliter fieri, & talem esse terminum eius.³⁵

The same idea is expressed in regard to Christ's temporal and eternal birth:

Ratione igitur istius prolationis in principio factae, dicitur ipse esse principium, & eadem ratione primogenitus dicendus est . . . nam prolatio illa in principio facta est ipsamet carnis generatio.³⁶

This is sufficient to indicate Servetus' pantheism and his doctrine concerning God and the Word as it relates to creation.

³² *De Erroribus*, 103 a. The quotations in this article from the *De Erroribus* are taken from the copy in the Library of Congress.

³³ *Ib.*, 51 a.

³⁴ *Ib.*, 79 a.

³⁵ *Ib.*, 81 a, b.

³⁶ *Ib.*, 54 a.

Milton, like Servetus, expressed his pantheism in various connections:

Boundless the deep, because I am who fill
 Infinitude, nor vacuous the space.³⁷

God is the boundless Deep, the infinite substance which is omnipresent in the cosmos, which, however, is endued with various forms and degrees of perfection: this is Renaissance pantheism.³⁸

One Almighty is, from whom
 All things proceed, and up to him return,
 If not depraved from good, created all
 Such to perfection, one first matter all,
 Indu'd with various forms, various degrees
 Of substance, and in things that live, of life.³⁹

This boundless "deep," this "first matter" "indu'd with various forms" is the

wild abyss,
 The womb of Nature and perhaps her grave,
 Of neither Sea, nor Shore, nor Air, nor Fire,
 But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
 Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain
 His dark materials to create more worlds,⁴⁰

In *The Christian Doctrine*, Milton says:

Substance is to be considered an efflux of Deity.⁴¹ In the first place, there are, as is well known to all, four kinds of causes, *efficient*, *material*, *formal*, and *final*. Inasmuch then as God is the primary, and absolute, and sole cause of all things, there can be no doubt but that he comprehends and embraces within himself all the causes above mentioned. Therefore the material cause must be God.⁴² Matter proceeded incorruptible from God.⁴³

Thus Milton's pantheism is that of Servetus. And we find that their theories of creation are likewise similar. Milton said:

³⁷ *P. L.*, VII, 168, 9.

³⁸ Cf. Windelband, *A History of Philosophy*, pp. 366-77.

³⁹ *P. L.*, V. 469 ff. Cf. *P. W.*, IV. 178. "All things are of God."

⁴⁰ *Ib.*, II. 910 ff.

⁴¹ *P. W.*, IV, 180.

⁴² *Ib.*, 178-9.

⁴³ *Ib.*, 180.

God the Father produced everything that exists by his Word and Spirit, that is, by his Will.⁴⁴ The Father is *he of whom*, and *from whom*, and *by whom*, and *for whom* are all things. The Son is not *he of whom*, but only *by whom*. . . .⁴⁵

Uriel's description of creation casts light on our question, and we quote its first lines; it was the Word who reduced a portion of God's material aspect to form and order:

I saw when at his Word the formless Mass
This world's material mould came to a heap;
Confusion heard his voice, and wilde uproar,
Stood rul'd, stood vast infinitude confin'd;
Till at his second bidding darkness fled,
Light shon, and order from disorder sprung.⁴⁶

Word may here be interpreted "the sound of his voice." And that is what he is:⁴⁷ the acting, the audible manifestation of God.

Milton emphasizes the invisibility and inaudibility of the Father;⁴⁸ he cannot even see, for the arch-angels are his eyes.⁴⁹ God never performs any action in his own being; he does so through his manifestations. The act of creation is simply reducing to order a portion of himself through the agency of his son and spirit—his energizing and illuminating powers. When God creates, he merely "puts forth his goodness,"⁵⁰ which he can choose to do or abstain from doing. It is the Father who thus, metaphorically, addresses the second member of the Trinity:

My Word, my wisdom, and effectual might,⁵¹

to whom the Word, prefiguring the Son, likewise replies:

Father Eternal, thine is to decree,
Mine both in heaven and earth to do thy will.⁵²

When the creator returns from his work, he sees

from his prospect high,
Wherein past, present, future, he beholds,⁵³

⁴⁴ *Ib.*, 170-1.

⁴⁵ *Ib.*, 91.

⁴⁶ *P. L.*, III, 708 ff.

⁴⁷ Cf. below, p. 927.

⁴⁸ *P. W.*, IV, 108.

⁴⁹ *P. L.*, III, 650.

⁵⁰ *Ib.*, VII, Cf. 171-3.

⁵¹ *Ib.*, III, 170.

⁵² *Ib.*, X, 68.

⁵³ *Ib.*, III, 77.

the new world,

how good, how faire,
Answering his great Idea.⁵⁴

Notice the Platonic conception. We need not pause further to remark upon the identity of the creation theories held by Servetus and Milton.

B. Theory of the Incarnation

In the theory of the Incarnation, we have something far more distinctive than in that of the Creation; for this is a part of Servetus' doctrine concerning the Word, which is one of the Trinity; and it was here that he made his theological contribution.

In this connection we have two problems to consider: first, what it was that became incarnate; second, what that thing was after the incarnation.

The first principle that Servetus lays down is this: before the incarnation there was no Son, but only a Word; after that—the Word having then ceased to exist as such—we have the Son of God:

Cogita perpetuo in hoc, nam ego dico, quod Verbum illud erat in Lege, Christi praefiguratio, Verbum illud erat umbra, & Christus est veritas. Joannes tam in Evangelio quam in epistola de Verbo dicit, erat, nunc autem post manifestationem, non est tale Verbum, sed res ipsa, cuius illud Verbum erat typus, nunquam enim de Verbo illo legimus, est, sed erat, nunc autem est filius Jesus Christus, quia id quod erat in Verbo, caro extitit.⁵⁵

Servetus warns his reader against considering the Word a thing, but insists that he is rather an oracle, the voice, or the speech of God:

Nam λόγος, non philosophicam illam rem, sed oraculum, vocem, sermonem, eloquium Dei sonat. Usurpatur enim a verbo, λέγω, quod est dico. . . .⁵⁶

What, then, was the Word? To this question Servetus gives an explicit answer:

Verbum ergo in Deo proferente, est ipsemet Deus loquens.⁵⁷ Prop-

⁵⁴ *Ib.*, VII, 556.

⁵⁶ *Ib.*, 47 b, 48 a.

⁵⁵ *De Error.*, 93 b, Cf. also *Ib.*, 80 a., b.

⁵⁷ *Ib.*, 48 b, 49 a.

teres dicitur ipse sermo patris, quia patris mentem enunciat, & eius cognitionem facit.⁵⁸

How, then, did the speaking God, the manifestation of the Father, become flesh? Servetus declares:

Haud secus quam si ego proferens verbum ex ore meo proiicerem aurum aut margaritas, nam tunc proprie loquendo diceretur, quod vox mea facta est aurum, potuit enim potentissimum Dei Verbum sine illo re rum coagulo in carnis transire materiam: & propterea Christus ipse nunc dicitur Verbum homo, Verbum caro.⁵⁹ . . . Id quod prius erat persona filii, nunc postquam factum est caro, est ipse Jesus Christus, qui est verus realis & naturalis filius Dei, nec est nunc in Deo alia hypostasis seu facies, nisi homo ipse Christus, nam veniente re ipsa, cessat personalia repraesentatio.⁶⁰ . . . Quem, obsecro, saporem habent ista insulsissima verba, secunda illa res erat apud primam. Nam sana Christi doctrina aliter intelligit Verbum fuisse apud deum, quia sacramentum hoc erat ab initio reconditum in mente divina, donec venit plenitudo temporis, & tunc manifestatum est quando Verbum caro factum est.⁶¹

We have, then, before the incarnation a power or manifestation of God, which Servetus calls the *Word*; this, however, is entirely distinct from the Son, which, as Servetus repeatedly asseverates, is a man, nothing but a man—the humanized Word or Logos, a human being filled with divinity. This man we call Christ Jesus. Jesus is not the mere bearer of the human nature or humanity; but intrinsically and solely a *man*:

Dico universas scripturas a prima usque ad ultimam loqui de homine ipso Christo.⁶²

In this man there is no duality of nature, as the orthodox theologians maintained; there is no mere joining of the human with the divine, but a complete going over of God's power into humanity. Christ is, quite contradictorily to the creeds of the Church, a single nature or person:

Ex his detegitur veritas illius vulgatae sententiae, qua dicunt duas naturas in Christi unitas, facere unam personam, & unum filium, quia alia est natura Verbi, alia carnis, et haec duo sunt una persona, quia Verbum caro factum est. . . . In qua sententia tot sunt errores quot verba.⁶³

⁵⁸ *Ib.*, 50 a.

⁵⁹ *Ib.*, *loc. cit.*

⁶⁰ *Ib.*, 93 a, b.

⁶¹ *Ib.*, 50 b.

⁶² *Ib.*, 21 a, b.

⁶³ *Ib.*, 93 a.

Quod de persona dicunt, magna est vocabuli abusio, dicere unam personam esse aggregatam ex duabus rebus, aut duabus naturis in unum cumulum unitis.⁶⁴ & non est nisi una persona & unus aspectus, quia id ipsum quod in Verbo relucebat, est ipse Christus.⁶⁵

This explanation was made possible by Servetus' pantheistic conception, of which the following doctrine was a further consequence: all men, being composed of the material of God, are sons of God. And Christ is different from each of us, not at all in kind, but only in degree, and is exalted by grace:

Ad argumentum istud pharisaeorum respondet ipse magister Joan. 10. Quia ego dixi dii estis, declarat ibi Christus se Deum non natura, sed specie, non per naturam, sed per gratiam. Nam cum argueretur, quia se deum faciebat, de Deo respondit eo modo quo prophetas deos dixit, eam sibi deitatis rationem attribuens. Etiam quia subdit, si eos dixit deos, ad quos sermo Dei factus est, quanto magis filius hominis quem pater sanctificat, nedum filius dicetur, sed etiam Deus. Ex privilegio igitur ei datum est, ut sit Deus, quia pater eum sanctificat, per gratiam unctus est, exaltatus, quia se humiliavit, exaltatus prae consortibus suis. Datum illi nomen, quod est super omne nomen. Et, ut inquit Petrus, accepit a Deo patre honorem & gloriam, quae omnia secundum gratiam sunt.⁶⁶

Christ, although he is a man purely, may, as Solomon, the prophets, and the angels are in the Old Testament, be called God because he is the messenger and representative of God:

Item, hanc in Christo Deitatis rationem, ex ueteri testamento cognoscet, si scruteris quae vox hebraica ponatur, quando Christus Deus vocatur. Et cum hoc notes differentiam inter יהוה proprium Dei nomen & יהוה-שם-אלהים & alia similia Deo attributa. Et quod Thomas Joannis 20. non Jehovah, sed elohim & adonai de Christo dixerit, infra probabo. . . . Imo Salomon iuxta historiam ibi dicitur elohim, est enim ille locus ex Psalmo 44. Nec Apostolus omne suae probationis robur in voce elohim fundat. Sed etiam quia dixit, Thronus & regnum eius in seculum seculi, nam ex sola voce Elohim non probasset Christum maiorem angelis, nec maiorem aliis principibus, qui ab eodem propheta dii dicuntur. Imo ab eodem Apostolo, & ibidem, Angeli vocantur elohim, dum dixit, Adorate eum omnes angeli. . . . Que res magnae apud Hebraeos nomine Deorum & angelorum vocantur, communibus nominibus est apud eos sermo de angelis & insignibus

⁶⁴ *Ib.*, 94 a.

⁶⁵ *Ib.*, 13 a.

⁶⁶ *Ib.*, 94 b.

hominibus. Et Petrus angelos eos vocat, qui Gene. 6 elohim, seu filii elohim dicuntur.⁶⁷

God is to be found in all his messengers, and these may, for that reason, be called gods:

Sed quia a Deo fluunt essentielles radii, & radiantes angeli, de eius thesauris a paterno pectore essentielles flatus tanquam filii ex utero patris egrediuntur, multiplices proficiscuntur divinitatis radii, quae omnia sunt Dei essentiae, & ipse est in eis. . . . Nec mittitur unquam ad nos coelestis nuncius, in quo non sit eius essentia. . . . Sicut dixi, . . . inde prouenit, quod divinitatis nomen nominibus angelorum est immixtum, quia eius essentia est eis im mixta.⁶⁸

Although Milton has no such detailed discussion concerning the nature of the Word and the Son as we find in the *De Erroribus*, it is plain that he holds the same general doctrines. Very significant is the following statement in which we find that Milton differentiates between the Word (the Logos) and the Son just as Servetus also does:

The Son existed in the beginning, under the name of Logos or Word, and was the first of the whole creation, by whom all things were made in heaven and earth.⁶⁹

The Son, then, was not specifically the Son in the beginning but the *Word* or *Logos*; and he it was who created everything. We are therefore to interpret the word *Son*, whenever it occurs in *Paradise Lost*, Platonically. He existed in the mind of God, but was not yet manifest. The fact, however, that he became incarnate in the fulness of time furnishes another good reason for calling him what he was to be; but, more important than this, he was already, in the eyes of God, the Son; for all things that ever shall come into being exist now in his mind.

That the Word was the visible, audible, acting God we learn in many passages which, because they are more important in another connection, are not quoted here.⁷⁰

Milton's doctrine concerning the humanity of Christ is next to be determined. The passages dealing with it are explicit: whenever Milton speaks of Jesus—the humanized Word—he is referring to a *man*:

⁶⁷ *Ib.*, 14 b, 15 a.

⁶⁸ *Ib.*, 102 b, 103 a.

⁶⁹ *P. W.*, IV. 80-1.

⁷⁰ Cf. below, p. 926-8.

till one greater man restore us.⁷¹
 So man, as is most just,
 Shall justifie for Man, be judged, and die.⁷²

Christ has

been found
 By Merit more than Birthright Son of God,
 Found worthiest to be so by being Good,
 Far more than Great or High.⁷³

Men hereafter may discern,
 From what consummate vertue I have chose
 This perfect man, by merit called my Son.⁷⁴

We see the consonance of view on these points: Servetus and Milton both conceive Jesus Christ as the incarnation of that which had been called the Word or Logos from eternity, but which, after its humanization, was a *man*.

In the next place, does Milton deny with Servetus the duality of Christ's nature? The doctrine follows:

The two natures constitute one Christ.⁷⁵ Those who divide this hypostatical union in Christ at their discretion, strip the answers of Christ of all their sincerity.⁷⁶ Christ being God, took upon him the human nature, and was made flesh, without ceasing thereby to be numerically the same as before.⁷⁷ It is now asserted that two natures are so combined in the one person of Christ that he has a real and perfect subsistence in the one nature independently of that which properly belongs to the other; insomuch that the two natures are comprehended in one person. . . . He [Zanchius] argues as if it were possible to assume human nature without at the same time assuming man; for human nature, that is, the form of man in a material mould constitutes at once the proper and entire man. . . . It is certain that the Logos was made that which he assumed; if then he assumed the human nature, not man, he was made, not man, but human nature; these two things being inseparable. . . .

I proceed to demonstrate the weakness of the received opinion. . . .

Hence the union of the two natures in Christ must be considered as the mutual hypostatical union of two essences; . . . so that one

⁷¹ *P. L.*, I. 4.

⁷² *Ib.*, III. 294.

⁷³ *Ib.*, 308.

⁷⁴ *P. R.*, I. 164.

⁷⁵ *P. W.*, IV. 295.

⁷⁶ *Ib.*, 100.

⁷⁷ *Ib.*, 288.

Christ, one ens, one person, is formed of this mutual hypostatical union.⁷⁸

Christ is, then, a person, a human being, a single entity; he is that which the Logos assumed. There is no duality of nature in Jesus. As in Servetus, this explanation must be based on pantheistic hypotheses. And, in both, this doctrine led to similar consequences. Any man may be called a god, and all men are sons of God: to Christ belongs these titles merely in a higher degree:

Be not so sore offended, Son of God,
Though Sons of God both angels are and men,
If I, to try whether in higher sort
Than those thou bear'st that title.⁷⁹

Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
In what degree or meaning thou art called
The Son of God, which bears no single sence;
The Son of God I also am, or was,
And if I was I am; relation stands;
All men are Sons of God; yet thee I thought
In some respect far higher so declared.⁸⁰

Furthermore, Milton explains the attributing of the word *God* to his messengers and representatives exactly as does Servetus:

It must be observed, in the first place, that the name of God is not infrequently ascribed, by the will and concession of God the Father, even to angels and men,—how much more then to the only-begotten Son, the image of the Father.⁸¹ . . . The name of God seems to be attributed to angels, because as heavenly messengers they bear the

⁷⁸ *Ib.*, 290–2. Here we have an example of Milton's very cautious argumentation in regard to ticklish problems in theology. But there can be no doubt that he is here maintaining the absolute oneness of Jesus' nature. Of course, the orthodox doctrine held the duality of his nature; and Milton says, "I proceed to demonstrate the weakness of the received opinion." He does not state his conclusion with great bluntness or emphasis, but the teaching is plain. When he uses the expression "two natures" he is either referring to the doctrine of others concerning Jesus, or to what were his constituent parts before the hypostasis. Now, however, we have one Christ, one ens, one person, that is, an entity or unity.

⁷⁹ *P. R.*, IV. 196.

⁸¹ *P. W.*, IV. 106–7.

⁸⁰ *Ib.*, 514–521.

appearance of the divine glory and person and even speak in the very words of the Deity.⁸²

And, lastly, Milton interprets *John*, chap. x, as Servetus had done before him:

The name of God is ascribed to Judges, because they occupy the place of God to a certain degree in the administration of judgment. The Son, who was entitled to the name of God both in the capacity of a messenger and of a judge, and indeed in virtue of a much better right, did not think it foreign to his character, when the Jews accused him of blasphemy because he made himself God, to allege in his own defence the very reason which has been advanced [cf. passages above]. *John* x, 34-36. "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"—especially when God himself hath called the judges children of the Most High.⁸³

We see that our parallel consists of the following remarkable agreements: both differentiate similarly between the Word and the Son; both consider the Word the visible, audible, acting, effectual God; both consider Jesus Christ the man whom the Logos assumed; both make Jesus a man, who, like every human being, may be called the son of God, and who, because he is the direct representative of God, may, for the best of reasons, be called by his name. These facts are significant.

We pass, then, to the next phase of our investigation.

C. *Theory of Redemption*

In the theory of redemption we are dealing with a problem in which the possibility of dependence can scarcely be said to exist—the material under discussion was the property of no one in particular. Nevertheless, it is of vital importance that we consider this doctrine because in it is to be found the cornerstone and goal of all the dogmas. A man's belief concerning the process of salvation was an expression of his subjective self, his personal needs, his attitude and comparative self-dependence. If Servetus and Milton hold the same heretical theory of redemption we know that their point of view was identical in religious matters.

⁸² *Ib.*, 107-8.

⁸³ *Ib.*, 109.

We wish to touch upon three principal elements in the theory of redemption: baptism, the relative efficacy of faith and works, and predestination.

We see, first, that the rationalistic attitude of both Servetus and Milton was expressed in their theory of baptism. They condemned paedobaptism on the ground that such a rite is mere mummary, for baptism should be nothing but an external seal bearing witness to an internal transformation already consciously and individually consummated. According to Milton and Servetus, holiness cannot be bestowed upon any one: it must be achieved.⁸⁴

Secondly, let us see what Servetus says about faith, works, and the nature of man's dependence upon God in salvation. Because he had no conviction concerning the corruption of human nature and therefore felt no subjective need for the Lutheran's externalized process of salvation, Servetus could not understand it. To him faith could not exist without good works: to the rationalist charity and religion are pretty much the same thing. Launching into a heated digressional diatribe, he exclaims in the *De Erroribus*:

Sed quid nunc agendum superest, postquam Christo credidimus & justificati sumus inquirant Lutherani; si non invenient, dormiant cum sua fide: non sufficiebat eis fide Christi carere. Nisi etiam charitatis mercede & omni virtutis actione populum privarent, solo fidei vento homines suspendunt & seipsos traducunt, fidem se habere dicunt, sed ego nunquam intelligere potui, quid est id quod habent, quod fidem appellant, uellem quod liberius & sine violentia scripturas acciperent, reiectaque animi occupatione pessima, non enim est mentitus Christus, quando charitate, ieiuniis, et precationibus, nos in regno coelorum thesaurizare, & copiosam mercedem in futuro seculo nobis parare dixit imo sine hoc, iustificatio est inanis, & in uacuum gratiam Dei recepimus, ipsi tamen violenter ad haec facienda populum trahere putant charitatem aiunt habete, sed nihil nobis proderit, ita segnes sua imaginatio homines facit, ut omnia negligant, orare non curent, dare eleemosynas est inutile: si de continentia, mortificatione carnis seu ieiunio loquaris, magno cachinno ridebunt.⁸⁵

The medieval dogma of man's corruption was repugnant to Servetus:

⁸⁴ Cf. Trechsel, *Antitrinitarier*, 139; Milton, *P. W.*, IV. 405—13.

⁸⁵ *De Error.*, 100 a, b.

All that men do you [Calvin] say is done in sin and mixed with dregs that stink before God, and merit nothing but eternal death. But therein you blaspheme. Stripping us of all possible goodness, you do violence to the teaching of Christ and the Apostles, who ascribe perfection, or the power of being perfect to us.⁸⁶

Faith must be clothed with the works of faith:

If faith be not clothed with charity, it dies in nakedness; and, as habit is strengthened by action, the body by exercise, and the understanding by study, so is faith strengthened by good works.⁸⁷

The Gospel has superseded the Law:

Christ, I say, accomplished the law and then it was abrogated; in him we have the New Covenant, the Old superseded: in him we are made free. The law of Moses was unbearable; it slew the soul, it increased sin, it begat anger; virtue itself became at times transgression, and in compassion for our frailty it was annulled.⁸⁸

The works of the law—fasts, observances, beads, etc.—that is, external labors performed to gain favor in the sight of God, are, as a means of salvation, totally without efficacy:

A most pestilential thing it is that Papal decrees and monastic vows are assumed as a means of salvation. When men bind themselves by vows to particular observances, they virtually declare that the salvation they have through Christ is insufficient, and lay themselves fast in those bonds of the law from which Christ came to set them free.⁸⁹

The necessity of faith in Jesus Christ as the saviour of the world, however,—without which Christianity *is* not—Servetus never denied:

. . . . in me credite, ex qua Christi praedicatione nobis regnum Dei unice evangelizatur, & hypostasis aeternae salutis est credere Jesum Christum esse filium Dei.⁹⁰

Faith . . . its essence being belief in the man Jesus Christ, as the Son of God. . . . The end and object of the whole New Testament teaching . . . is to lead men to a belief of this kind, whereby they are reconciled and made acceptable to God, conceive a detestation for sin and become exemplars and exponents of the Christian virtues,—Love, Hope, and Charity. Faith of this kind makes us aware of our poverty, of our misery. For if we believe that the man Jesus is the Son of God,

⁸⁶ Willis, 175. This of course, was the old Pelagian argument.

⁸⁷ *Ib.*, 185. Letter to Calvin.

⁸⁹ *Ib.*, 77; from the *Dialogues*.

⁸⁸ *Ib.*, 186.

⁹⁰ *De Error.*, 96 b.

the Savior of the World, we already admit that the world lies in sin and so needs saving.⁹¹

Willis thus sums up Servetus' very modern conception of Christianity:

Far from maintaining that the heart of man is corrupt and evil by nature, he holds that the cause of good works and well-doing is proper and spontaneous to the individual, who is only answerable for his own sin, not for the sin of another. Faith in Christ, therefore, as the naturally begotten Son of God; Charity, in which are comprised all the virtues, and a good life, . . . form the backbone of Servetus's Christianity, as it is unfolded in his earliest work on the "Current Misconceptions of the Trinity."⁹²

Milton maintains the same point of view throughout. Being a rationalist, he could not understand the supra-rational quality of Christianity or wherein the virtue of passive faith consists.⁹³ It is impossible that the author of the *Areopagitica* could ever accept any incomprehensible dogma. Implicit and passive faith is worthless; the works which the Christian performs are those directly issuing from faith, and are its inevitable expression:

Hence implicit faith, which sees not the objects of hope, but yields belief with a blind assent, cannot possibly be genuine faith. . . .⁹⁴

The seat of faith is . . . in the will.⁹⁵

We are justified therefore by faith, but by a living, not a dead faith; and that faith alone which acts is counted living. Hence we are justified by faith without the works of the law, but not without the works of faith; inasmuch as a living and true faith cannot consist without works.⁹⁶

Milton, as well as Servetus, is not without the old Pelagian argument:

Hence such as are strenuous in this conflict, and earnestly and unceasingly labor to attain perfection in Christ . . . are . . . by

⁹¹ Willis, 214-5.

⁹² *Ib.*, 70.

⁹³ Cf. *Areopagitica* as a whole and especially the passages beginning "I cannot praise," and "A man may be a heretic in the truth."

⁹⁴ *P. W.*, IV. 338.

⁹⁵ *Ib.*, 342. This, of course, is a denial of the Lutheran theory of justification.

⁹⁶ *Ib.*, 355.

imputation and through divine mercy, frequently in the Scripture called *perfect*.⁹⁷

The Gospel has abrogated the Law, which was an evil thing:

Under the Gospel, we possess, as it were, a two-fold Scripture; one external, which is the written word, and the other internal, which is the Holy Spirit, written in the hearts of believers . . . which is the Spirit itself.⁹⁸

The whole of the Mosaic law is abolished by the Gospel.⁹⁹

The Law, said Milton, "worketh wrath,"¹⁰⁰ is "a law of sin and death,"¹⁰¹ "is a source of trouble and subversion,"¹⁰² "takes away and frustrates all promises."¹⁰³

The Catholic doctrine of artificial works Milton of course also condemns.¹⁰⁴ Milton, however,—again like Servetus—always emphasizes the need of faith in Christ:

Nor does this doctrine [of works which result from faith] derogate in any degree from Christ's satisfaction; inasmuch as, our faith being imperfect, the works which proceed from it cannot be pleasing to God except in so far as they rest upon the mercy and the righteousness of Christ and are sustained upon that foundation alone.¹⁰⁵

Milton's doctrine of faith, works, and charity, so fully consonant with that of Servetus, is most clearly enunciated in *Paradise Lost* on the authority of Michael:

Onely add

Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add Faith,
Add Vertue, Patience, Temperance, add Love,
By name to come call'd Charitee, the soul
Of all the rest; then wilt thou not be loath
To leave this Paradise, but wilt possess
A Paradise within thee, happier farr.¹⁰⁶

As we proceed, the uniquely similar systems of Servetus and Milton are seen to be more and more fully parallel.

Freely assuming much concerning predestination, Servetus says in one of his early publications:

⁹⁷ *Ib.*, 349.

⁹⁸ *Ib.*, 447.

⁹⁹ *Ib.*, 393.

¹⁰⁰ *Ib.*, 390.

¹⁰¹ *Ib.*, 391.

¹⁰² *Ib.*, *loc. cit.*

¹⁰³ *Ib.*, *loc. cit.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ib.*, 356-8.

¹⁰⁵ *Ib.*, 356.

¹⁰⁶ *P. L.*, XII., 581 ff.

In the Scriptures, predestination is not spoken of save in connection with belief and believers.¹⁰⁷ God, I say, sees no one justified from eternity, unless he believes.¹⁰⁸ . . . You [Calvin] speak of free acts, yet really say that there is no such thing as free action. . . . Truly God does act in us: but in such wise that we act freely. He acts in us so that we understand and will, choose, determine, and pursue. Even as all things consist essentially in God, so do all things proceed essentially from him.¹⁰⁹ The Spirit of God is innate in man, and as the power to do is one thing, so is the necessity another.¹¹⁰

To give a full exposition of Milton's doctrine of the will, which, in sum, is that of Servetus, would be an essay in itself. We can here take no space to do this, but refer the interested reader to the documents.¹¹¹

We see, then, that in regard to the great questions of baptism, faith, predestination, the relation between the Law and the Gospel, and the nature, possibility, and efficacy of good works—wherein are comprised the principles of redemption and justification—Milton and Servetus quite agree.

D. *Theory of the Trinity*¹¹²

In the theory of the Trinity we have the vital portion of our comparison. This was what Francis Cheynell called the "object

¹⁰⁷ This is exactly what Milton also says; cf. *P. W.*, IV. 43.

¹⁰⁸ Willis, 179, Letter to Calvin.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *P. L.*, V. 469 ff.

¹¹⁰ Willis, 185; cf. *De Error*. 81 b.

¹¹¹ Cf. *P. W.*, IV. 30-77; *P. L.* III. 80-343.

¹¹² L. A. Wood, in his *Form and Origin of Milton's Antitrinitarian Conception*, thinks he has found the source of Milton's theory of the Trinity in the *XXX Dialogi* of Ochino. I wish to comment briefly on his work.

The most obvious fact is that Wood does not discuss the Trinitarian conception of Milton and Ochino at all, but only the conception of the Second Person; of course, the First and Third Persons are just as important in any discussion of this kind, in order to find the truth, as the other. In the next place, Wood does not discuss any fundamental conceptions, but the merest details and trifles, which we might find in almost any writer on the subject. And, finally, the details which he gives do, in my opinion, by no means express the similarity which he claims for them.

Wood makes a great deal of the fact that Milton and Ochino both wrote in favor of polygamy. One is tempted to think that Wood believed, because they both maintained the theory of polygamy, that Milton's Trinitarian conception must be traced to Ochino. But, as it happens, we have conclusive evidence which shows that there is no significance in this matter. In the *Commonplace*

of our Faith." But to men like Servetus and Milton reason is the greatest object of faith; and they denied the Trinity because

Book (p. 114)—about which Wood seems to have known nothing—there is an entry from Sir Walter Raleigh, belonging to the period before 1644, which shows that Milton was in favor of polygamy at this comparatively early date. And the following entry, undoubtedly made after that from Raleigh, is from Thuanus. This is a note from the historian to the effect that Sebastian Castellio had translated Ochino's book on polygamy. But beyond this Milton of course knew nothing about Ochino's views on marriage, at that time, although he himself already believed in polygamy. Wood's conclusion that Milton shows the influence of Ochino in his views concerning the marital relationship is certainly unfounded.

Now, as to the *Dialogi* themselves, and Milton's relation to them: we must remember that Ochino's treatment is a dialogue between persons of different views, and that we cannot tell what the belief of the author actually is. One of the speakers is orthodox and goes under the author's own name—Ochino thought he could shield his own heterodoxy in this way. The title of the dialogue in which we are interested is this: "Concerning the Holy Trinity: it is shown in the same that there exist three Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, differing in themselves, but consubstantial and alike eternal." (Benrath, London, 1876, p. 288). Now this, of course, is the perfectly orthodox point of view and that which the speaker called "Ochino" represents. If this were indeed proved, as the title asserts, the churches of Switzerland could not have objected to the dialogue, nor could Milton have derived heresy from it. But Ochino, it was charged, allowed his opponent "Spiritus" (the Spirit of Doubt) to argue better for the heretics than he did for the orthodox. The proposition contained in the title is that which "Ochino," though somewhat weakly, defends throughout the work. So, if we are going to find anything from which Milton might have drawn his ideas, we must find it in the words of "Spiritus."

Let us then examine those words in one or two passages at least. Christ is, says Spiritus, "God's Spirit generated by God, who by his voice called the world into being; then by assuming the form of man, he exercised His works as the Logos of God." (Wood, p. 68). But this is by no means Milton's conception of the problem. Christ, before the incarnation, was not the Spirit, but the Word, the Logos, the Wisdom of God, as Milton clearly says: and after the incarnation was not the Logos, nor did he exercise his works as the *Logos*, but as a *man*. This is fundamental. Wood says: "Milton's own words indicate his belief that Christ was of the same essence as the Father." (p. 64). But this is precisely the thing that the seventy-two pages of Chapter V. in *The Christian Doctrine* are written to deny. Milton goes deeply into the metaphysics of theology on this subject. I will quote just two passages to illustrate. "Now it is evident that those who have not the same will cannot have the same essence. It appears, however, from many passages, that the Father and the Son have not . . . the same . . . will." (*P. W.*, IV. 100). "The Word therefore is not of the same essence with God." (*Ib.*, 109). Further, Spiritus says: "He [Christ] was im-

of its evident irrationality; Servetus exclaims hotly in the *De Erroribus*:

Reperies quod trinitas non est intelligibilis sine tribus phantasmatibus, quia necesse est intelligentem phantasmata speculari 3 de anima. Immo quaternitatem intellectu colis, licet verbo neges. Nam quatuor habes simulachra, & quartum est circa essentiam phantasma, quia necesse intelligendo essentiam phantasmata speculari. . . . Et nunc etiam, si advertias, cognoscere potes, que tua trinitas nihil aliud est nisi quidam in imaginativa specierum motus qui dementatum te tenet.

Si dicas, omnes una voce clamant, quod sufficit credere, licet res non sit intelligibilis. . . . Quid est id quod a te intellectum credis? an forte ipsam cerebri confusionem pro sufficienti fidei obiecto reputas? . . . Sed de tribus rebus unam naturam constituentibus, nec de prope, nec de longe unquam habuisti sensationem: nec aliquos gradus ad alios comparare potes, cum nec duae, nec tres, nec plures res, in unam naturam concurrentes reperiantur, & per consequens non reperitus fundamentum sensu perceptum, unde talem noticiam intellectus syllogizando concludat.¹¹³

Similarly Milton:

Reason itself, however, protests strongly against the doctrine in question [the Trinity]; for how can reason establish (as it must in the present case) a position contrary to reason? Undoubtedly the product of reason [the Bible, the product of God's reason], must be something consistent with reason [which exists in the mind of man], not a notion as absurd as it is removed from all human comprehension. Hence we conclude that this opinion is agreeable neither to Scripture nor reason.¹¹⁴

It is evident, of course, that Servetus and Milton sought some explanation of the Trinity comprehensible to human reason;

measurable, just as the other two persons." (Wood, 72). But Milton says: "Christ, although exalted to a state of highest glory, exists nevertheless in one definite place, and has not, as some contend, the attribute of ubiquity." (*P. W.*, IV, 308).

On the basis of what Wood has given us, it would be easy to cite a dozen such discrepancies. And if the passages which Wood quotes are so divergent from Milton's beliefs, the rest of Ochino is probably even more so. Furthermore, Wood does not seem to have clearly understood the terms which he was discussing; for example, instead of *hypostasis* he says *hypothesis*, which, theologically, is meaningless. And he also makes the ludicrous blunder of confusing the philosopher Socrates with Socrates Scholasticus. Milton's ideas concerning the Trinity cannot be traced to Ochino.

¹¹³ *De Error.*, 33 b, 34 a. ¹¹⁴ *P. W.*, IV, 95.

the merit of supra-rational faith was utterly inconceivable to them.

Before going further it would perhaps be well to set forth what Servetus' conception of the Trinity was. As the basis of it, we have a monistic pantheism, a single unified substance in the entire universe which is God himself. In this substance or essence there are not various existences, but three aspects of existence, three manifestations of the same reality. God the Father is the material of the cosmos, and also will or destiny—the fundamental (perhaps Servetus means the psychical and physical) law which governs all spirit, matter, and motion—all relations between cause and effect; God the Word is the energetic force in the universe, the power of action, creation, effectual strength—it is God exhibited as power or might; God the Spirit is nothing definite; he is illumination, vitality, irradiance. These three aspects of godhead are found in the cosmos as a whole (where they constitute the Trinity or God) and in every portion of the cosmos—in every rock, stream, tree, animal, man, and angel. In all living things, from the lowliest herb to man, we have substance, energy, and animation. Without these nothing can exist, at least it cannot exhibit the mysterious life-giving principle. Just as my body, my strength, and my warmth or animation are all myself—and none of these more so than any other—just so are the Father, the Word, and the Spirit all the same thing; they are but differing aspects of God in the universe.

At the beginning we have this Trinity, which now, however—in Gospel times—has undergone a change. God the Father is the same as always, but the Word now exists as Son, by whom the Father performs his necessary labors; and the Holy or the general Spirit of God no longer remains alone: there is also in existence a special spirit, which we call the Holy Ghost, whose business it is to illuminate the hearts of believers, and who has no existence apart from them. This conception is definite, rational, and comprehensible; the mind can apprehend it clearly. Although Servetus never gives a complete exposition of his theory in a single passage, we may gather it from various portions of the *De Erroribus* and organize the fragments into unity and coherence.

The Trinity of aspect, mode, disposition, or manifestation (the original Trinity) is fully explained in Servetus' book:

Quia tres sunt admirandae Dei dispositiones, in quarum qualibet divinitas relucet: ex quo sanissime trinitatem intelligere posses; nam Pater est tota substantia et unus Deus. . . . Et tres sunt, non aliqua rerum in Deo distinctione, sed per Dei *οικονομια* variis Deitatis formis; nam eadem Divinitas, quae est in Patre, communicatur filio J. Christo et spiritui nostro . . . ; et hoc est, quod distinctae personae dicuntur, i.e., multiformes deitatis aspectus, diversae facies et species.¹¹⁵

We are to bear in mind, further, that God and his manifestations are identical: God is wholly Word and also wholly Spirit, just as Word is also Spirit and Spirit Word. We can no more separate these than we can the voice from the speaker or the light from the luminary.

Praeterea, sicut Deus est totus logos, ita est totus spiritus, & sicut cogitando loquitur, ita loquendo spirat, . . . & propterea dicitur verbo eius & spiritu eius omnia esse facta . . . proprium enim spiritus Dei est vivificare et roborare: & sicut nulla res sine Verbo eius fit, ita nulla est res, nec lapis nec herba, quae sine spiritu dei virtutem aliquam habeat.¹¹⁶

Speaking accurately, there are really only two dispositions in God—Word (which alone is visible) and Spirit: God ought not,

¹¹⁵ *De Error.*, 29 a, b. Cf. also 37 a, b; 65a, and 85 b. We have here enunciated' in the clearest terms a, *modal* Trinity. Of course, a Trinity of mode was not the invention of Servetus; the ancient Sabellians, Photinians, etc., were all modalists, and it was probably, as Harnack says, out of their heresies, although they were more or less rational, that the Creed of Nicæa was drawn. The Sabellians, etc., were attempting to justify the belief in Christ's full divinity, which was certainly not accepted during the first century, A. D.; but they never thought of such a Trinity as that conceived by Servetus. Their thinking was crude, naïve, and was suppressed and superseded by that of Athanasius. They never conceived of more than a single existence, or even form of existence at one time. They thought that the Father had existed from the beginning or from eternity, in a more or less anthropomorphic state; that he came to earth, and, for thirty-three years, continued to exist as the Son, the Father being then no more; and, after the resurrection, both Father and Son having ceased to exist, the Deity is now Holy Spirit alone. It is easy to see that Servetus' thought has nothing in common with this ancient, simple, and naïve ratiocination. Cf. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, London, 1897, III. 1-113. Servetus himself, however, felt, that because he said that God had gone over into humanity in Jesus, he might be accused of Patripassianism; but he found it very easy to refute any such imputation, which he did at length. Cf. *De Erroribus*, 76 a, b; 77 a.

perhaps specifically, be called a manifestation of himself:

Et sciendum, quod licet communiter tres concedantur hypostases, tamen proprius loquendo, dico, quod in Deo erant duae dispositiones, scilicet oraculum & spiritus, & in solo oraculo erat visibilis hypostasis.¹¹⁷

The relation of the Word to God is explained in many passages: he is called God speaking, the twin-picture of God, the means by which God communicates and reveals himself in sense. He is called the oracle, the voice, the word, the speech of God. God, who is in himself utterly inconceivable and incomprehensible, makes himself known through the Word and the Spirit. This and more is made clear in the various passages relating to the problem; notice the following:

When John says, "In the beginning was the Word," we are to understand the prefiguration of Christ in Deity: invisible in himself, God the Father is visible in the Son.¹¹⁸

In principio erat Verbum, id est, eloquium seu vox Dei, quia in principio dixit Deus. . . . Nam λόγος, non philosophicam rem, sed oraculum, vocem, sermonem, eloquium Dei sonat. . . . Verbum ergo in Deo proferente, est ipsemet Deus loquens.¹¹⁹

The Word was nothing distinct from the Father:

Et Deus erat ille sermo. Praevidit Joannes istos philosophos qui ita arguunt, Verbum illud erat apud Deum, ergo erat res aliqua distincta, ad quorum tollendam calumniam, adiecit statim, & Deus erat illud Verbum, hoc est, ut inquit Ireneus, ipsemet pater loquens dicitur esse logos.¹²⁰

The Word was the prefiguration of the future man, the means by which God revealed himself in sense:

Pro quo dico et ad hoc tendit praedicatio Joannis, Verbum jam ab initio ad illud erat prolatum, praeparatum et destinatum, ut caro fieret; et jam in illo erat apud Deum futuri hominis repraesentatio et effigies.¹²¹

Joan. 1. Verbum erat apud Deum. πρὸς τὸν θεόν. Quasi dicat, in

¹¹⁶ *Ib.*, 67 a.

¹¹⁷ *Ib.*, 109 b.

¹¹⁸ Willis, 405-6. From the *Restitutio Christianismi*.

¹¹⁹ *De Error.*, 47 b; 48b.

¹²⁰ *Ib.*, 50 b.

¹²¹ *Ib.*, 87 a.

conspectu, in facie Dei, & Verbum fuisse patris *εἰκόνα* ibi significatur, quod nihil aliud erat nisi hominis effigies.¹²²

All knowledge of God must be derived from the Word or from Christ; he is, as it were, the twin-picture of God, and is like the face of the Sun seated in the midst of immeasurability and unapproachable light:

Nec dicitur ad sensum eorum imago patris, sed effigies Dei, character Dei invisibilis quasi dicat, in homine visibili esse *εἰκόνα* invisibilis Dei quae omnia tendunt ad Magistri dictorum interpretationem, qui vidit me, vidit patrem: & si me nouissetis, nouissetis & patrem.¹²³ Cognitionem, quam de Deo per Christum acquirimus (si capacitatem tuam solido rationis indicio examinaveris) facile agnosces. Est enim Deus de se incomprehensibilis, nec imaginari, nec intelligi, nec excogitari potest, nisi vultum aliquem in eo consyderes, & hoc ipsum est Christi effigies & Verbi persona.¹²⁴ Et Verbi consyderatione secllusa, Deus est penitus invisibilis & inimaginabilis.¹²⁵

Ex his nota, quod improprie dicitur Christus imago Dei, immo plus est quam imago, nam imago est, quando duae res sunt simili modo figuratae & qualibet dicitur imago alterius . . . & oraculum illud non potuit proprie dici imago patris, sed plus quam imago, erat enim ipsamet facies Dei & ipsemet Deus erat effigies seu forma quaedam: ipsum met esse Dei continens.¹²⁶

Dicitur ergo Christus, aspectus, facies, effigies, signum, character, sigillum, insignis nota, insculptura quaedam hypostaseos, id est, existentiae Dei, quia in eo solo subsistit Deus, nec est Deus per aliquem apparuit eius oraculum, Jesu Christi persona, id ipsum erat Deus, id alium cognoscibilis Et sicut in medio immensitatis & inaccessae lucis apparet solaris vultus, ita in medio altitudinum & profunditatum Dei apparuit einus oraculum, Jesu Christi persona, id ipsum erat Deus, id ipsum nunc est visio Dei, iste est nobis propositus pro signo, nec est in aliquo alio salus, nec aliqua alia Dei visio, nec aliquid aliud vidit Joannes, dum dixit *ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν*. Haec est altitudo & profunditas cognitionis Christi, haec est illa Dei virtus, dispositio & αἰκονία, quae omnia in mundo operabatur, sicut & Joannes dixit Omnia per ipsum fuerunt.¹²⁷

The Holy or general Spirit is the breath of God experienced or felt in the winds, the torrents, the lightning, etc.; it is given to man when the breath of life is conferred upon him. Sometimes it is an emotion, sometimes animation, sometimes an

¹²² *Ib.*, 88 b.

¹²³ *Ib.*, 107 a.

¹²⁴ *Ib.*, 103 a.

¹²⁵ *Ib.*, 106 a.

¹²⁶ *Ib.*, *loc. cit.*

¹²⁷ *Ib.*, 107 a, b.

impulse, sometimes the light or knowledge by which the prophets were inspired. The Holy Spirit is a very indefinite thing, neither seen nor heard, but only felt:

Et sicut eo ipso quod dixerit res adest, ita eo ipso quod virtute spiritus iusserit, res stat perfecta, proprium enim spiritus Dei est vivificare et roborare: & sic ut nulla res sine Verbo eius fit, ita nulla est res, nec lapis nec herba, quae sine spiritu dei Virtutem aliquam habeat.¹²⁸

Nam per Spiritum sanctum nunc ipsum Deum, nunc angelum, nunc spiritum hominis, instinctum quendam, seu divinum mentis flatum, mentis impetum, sive halitum intelligit, licet aliquando differentia notetur inter flatum & spiritum. Et aliqui per Spiritum sanctum nihil aliud intelligi volunt, quam rectum hominis intellectum & rationem. Et apud Hebraeos ללל nihil aliud nisi spiraculum seu flatum significat, quod indifferenter ventos & spiritus dicitur, & apud Graecos πνεῦμα pro quocunque spiritu & mentis impetu capitur.¹²⁹

Frequensque est in scripturis mentio de existentia Dei patris & filii, . . . at de Spiritu sancto non fit mentio, nisi ubi est sermo de agendo, quasi per quandam accidentalem praedicationem, quod est notatu dignum, quasi Spiritus sanctus non rem aliquam separatam, sed Dei agitationem, energiam quandam seu inspirationem virtutis Dei designet.¹³⁰

Item, quod spiritus sanctus non fit res distincta, ex eo probatus, quia dicitur spiritus Christi, & spiritus filii.¹³¹

In the following we have a complete and connected exposition concerning the Spirit, in which Servetus carefully differentiates between the general and special spirit, the Holy Spirit and the Holy Ghost:

Similiter discrimen est inter Spiritum sanctum & spiritum Dei, quia sanctus dicitur, dum ad sanctificandum spiritum nostrum mittitur, ut infra dicam. Sed spiritus Dei dicitur, dum mittitur in omnem terram.¹³² Haec de spiritu Dei, ad spiritum sanctum sunt praeludia, nam sanctitatis ratio quae actioni spiritus Dei additur, nihil philosophicum importat, agit enim spiritus Dei interius & exterius, sanctificatur vero quod interius est. Unde notemus differentiam inter flatum & spiritum, nam flatus dicitur dum ab extra venit, dum vero intus agens, spiritum hominis illustrat & sanctificat; sanctus dicitur spiritus, non enim dicimur accipere flatum, sed adveniente flatu spiritum accipimus.¹³³

¹²⁸ *Ib.*, 67 a.

¹²⁹ *Ib.*, 22 b, 23 a.

¹³⁰ *Ib.*, 29 a.

¹³¹ *Ib.*, 31 b—32 a.

¹³² *Ib.*, 62 a.

¹³³ *Ib.*, 61 a.

De Spiritu sancto iam dixi, Deum dare nobis Spiritum suum, eo solo, quia dat flatum vitae. . . . Non enim ex nobis, neque ex nostra natura vita est, sed secundum gratiam Dei datur, & ex flatu Dei in materiam luteam efficitur homo in animam viventem, Gene. i. Philosophi tamen sic credunt Deum elementis & stellis virtutem suam commisisse, quasi ipse se expoliauerit, credunt nos ab ipso vento respirando conservari, quasi a naturali proprietate, non consyderata gratia Dei, quod est ingratissimum mendacium, immo dicendum est, in illa quae aspiratur & respiratur materia esse Deitatis energiam & vivificantem spiritum, nam ipse spiritu suo nobis halitum vitae sustinet, dans flatum populo qui est super terram, & spiritum calcantibus eam, ipse movet coelos solus, educit ventos de thesauris suis, ligat aquam in nubibus coeli, dat pluuiam in tempore suo, ipse solus faciens omnia haec faciens semper mirabilia solus.

Rudi Minerva, ut ad Spiritum Sanctum perveniamus, a spiritu Dei incipimus, hanc enim deitatis energiam non agnoscentes philosophi intelligere non valuerunt, quorsum spiritus venti, appellari posset spiritus Dei, Gene. i. Nec curant ipsi, si deus de thesauris suis illum ad nos mittat, & per eum influat. Sciant ergo deinceps, quod intra ipsam venti substantiam est ipsemet Deus agens, ecce in ore tuo, in spiritu tuo intra & extra est ipse Deus ita praesens, sicut si manu tangeres illum, Acta. xvii. Agitatione spiritus eius aguntur virtutes coelorum. Res mortua est orbicularis materia, nisi a spiritu Dei agitur.¹³⁴

Nunc scio quod amplissimus Dei spiritus replet orbem terrarum, continet omnia, & in singulis operatur virtutes.¹³⁵

Speaking specifically of the Holy Ghost, Servetus explains:

Ex his patet, non esse rem separatam, sed omnis sanctitas spiritus ad hominem refertur, et nuncio excepto, qui descendens dicitur spiritus sanctus, dico, quod nihil aliud extra hominem dicitur spiritus sanctus.— In ipso enim actu dationis dicitur spiritus sanctus; nec dicitur esse, antequam detur.¹³⁶

Dic igitur, quod spiritus sanctus est divina in hominis spiritu agitatio. . . . Christo credentes, sanctificat Deus: ideo dicitur, spiritus in homine sanctus, & ex fide Christi.¹³⁷

Our chief remaining problem consists in a careful analysis of passages in *Paradise Lost* and the *Christian Doctrine* to discover their teaching concerning the Trinity.

¹³⁴ *Ib.*, 60 a—b.

¹³⁵ *Ib.*, 60 b—61 a.

¹³⁶ *Ib.*, 66 a.

¹³⁷ *Ib.*, 110 a—b.

The latter of these, as we have said, is a carefully guarded treatise on theology; that which Milton there attacks is the orthodox, post-gospel conception of the Trinity, and has little in common with Servetus' imaginative interpretation of the opening verses of the mystical fourth gospel. The orthodox creed made no distinction between the pre- and post-gospel Trinity. It was not necessary for Milton to discuss the modal Trinity in his Treatise: he did not there put forth any great constructive ideas concerning it, but, like the Socinians and all rationalists, contented himself with *suppression*. Concerning the Son, to the establishment of whose inferiority in relation to the Father, Milton devotes a considerable portion of the *De Doctrina*, he says:

Since, therefore, the Son derives his essence from the Father,¹³⁸ he is posterior to the Father not merely in rank . . . but also in essence.¹³⁹ And concerning the Holy Ghost:

He is a minister of God, and therefore a creature . . . created or produced . . . later than the Son, and far inferior to him.¹⁴⁰

There is in this neither an equality nor a Trinity; but it contains nothing contradictory to the teaching of Servetus if we bear in mind the fact that Milton is here speaking of the postgospel Trinity. Jesus is a man, although he may be called the Son of God, and God.¹⁴¹

It is in *Paradise Lost* that we find Milton freed from the guarded expression of the suspected and therefore careful theologian; where, furthermore, he was dealing, not with the post-gospel, but with the original Trinity. Do we here find inferiority attributed to the Holy Spirit and, especially, to the Son or the Word? Do we find any personal differentiation among the members of the Trinity? What is the being of God, Word, and Spirit? If we find that Servetus' unique exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity is here not only reflected, but strongly expressed, we are face to face with the conclusion that Milton had read Servetus and drawn vital inspiration from him.

¹³⁸ Milton here, of course, refers to the Son, the *man* Jesus.

¹³⁹ *P. W.*, IV. 133.

¹⁴⁰ *Ib.*, 169.

¹⁴¹ "Primo hic [Christ] est Jesus Christus [who is to be regarded as a man in the N. T.]; Secundo, hic est filius Dei; Tertio, hic est Deus." (*De Error.* 2 a).

The relationship existing among the members of the Trinity is made clear in a number of passages, of which the following are important:

Meanwhile the Son
On his great expedition now appeared.¹⁴²

And thou, my Word, begotten Son, by thee
This I perform, speak thou, and be it don.¹⁴³

Father Eternal, thine is to decree
Mine both in heav'n and earth to do thy will.¹⁴⁴

It is evident that God creates the world, even though, specifically, the *Word* performs the act. The two are as inseparable as the convex and the concave of a curve. But still more important are the following lines, in which the "King of Glorie" (God the Father) is identified with the Word and Spirit—his manifestations:

The King of Glorie in his powerful Word¹⁴⁵
And Spirit coming to create new Worlds.¹⁴⁶

It is God, then, who is coming, but in the *form* of Word and Spirit. It is obvious that the three must be various aspects of the same thing. The Word and Spirit are modes by which the Willing Power reveals itself. Again:

The creator from his work
Desisting, though unwearied, up return'd
Up to the Heav'n of Heav'ns his high abode
Thence to behold this new created World
Th' addition of his Empire, how it shew'd
In prospect from his Throne, how good, how faire,
Answering his great Idea.¹⁴⁷

Analysis of this passage will reveal the fact that no differentiation is here made between God the Father and God the Word. The latter is called the Creator; not merely him *by whom* the things were made; the Empire is called his, as well as the Throne,

¹⁴² *P. L.*, VII, 192. Notice the Platonic significance of the first line.

¹⁴³ *Ib.*, 163.

¹⁴⁴ *Ib.*, X, 68.

¹⁴⁵ *Powerful* here means "might-possessing."

¹⁴⁶ *Ib.*, VII, 208. Cf. also *P. W.*, IV, 170-1.

¹⁴⁷ *Ib.*, 551.

and the archetypal Idea. It must be evident that whatever it was that went into the Deep, it was not a being separate from the Father, nor yet the Father himself in his original capacity, but a manifestation of him. The Word is simply God communicating himself in sense. In Heaven the Word and the Father are represented as speaking to one another, but God is always invisible and inaudible. This speaking is the adaptation of God to human comprehension, which Milton must concede to our human weakness and his own. We find here expressed the conception of a *modal* Trinity.

We find, in the next place, that Milton's expressions concerning the relationship existing between the Father and the Word are peculiarly similar to those of Servetus. Throughout *Paradise Lost* we necessarily notice that God *does* nothing. He "utters [metaphorically] his voice" from the midst of a golden cloud; he is surrounded and hidden by divine effulgence; the archangels are his eyes.¹⁴⁸ When Satan and his followers rebel, Michael, with his warriors, is first sent against them; next the Word, Platonically called Messiah or the Son, goes forth to battle. The Word, too, created the heavens and the earth and all creatures in them; it was he who, assuming the humanized form, became Jesus, the man, who thus performed the will of God; and, lastly, it is he who is now the mediator between God and men. The Father remains always inscrutable and unknowable. He is

Omnipotent,
Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,
Eternal King; thee, Author of all Being,
Fountain of light, thyself invisible
Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sitt'st
Throned inaccessible, but when thou shad'st
The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud
Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine
Dark with excessive light thy skirts appear,
Yet dazzle heaven, that brightest Seraphim
Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.¹⁴⁹

It is otherwise with the Word; it is he who reveals the Father. He is acting, visible, audible; he is God's "Wisdom and effectual might." In him is all the Father, "substantially expressed."

¹⁴⁸ *P. L.*, III. 650.

¹⁴⁹ *Ib.*, 372 ff.

He is the "divine similitude," "the effulgence of God's glory," etc.

The Word was audible. But God, as he cannot be seen, so neither can he be heard.¹⁵⁰

God says:

My Word, my Wisdom, and effectual might.¹⁵¹

Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
In full resplendence, Heir of all my might.¹⁵²

Effulgence of my Glorie, Son below'd,
Son in whose face invisible, is beheld,
Visibly, what by Deity I am.¹⁵³

Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,
In whose conspicuous count'nance without cloud,
Made visible, the Almighty Father shines.¹⁵⁴

Other passages treating the same subject express the same idea:

Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
Most glorious, in him all his Father shon
Substantially expressed.¹⁵⁵

Thus saying, from his radiant seat he rose
Of high collateral glory.¹⁵⁶

On his right
The radiant image of his Glory sat
His onely Son.¹⁵⁷

All his Father in him shon.¹⁵⁸

The fact that the Word is nothing but the visible, audible, and effectual expression of God must be clear. We are further convinced of the identity of the Father and the Word by the following passage, spoken by the Creator to Adam:

What thinkst thou then of mee, and this my State?
..... who am alone

¹⁵⁰ *P. W.*, IV. 109.

¹⁵¹ *P. L.*, III. 170

¹⁵² *Ib.*, V. 719.

¹⁵³ *Ib.*, VI. 680.

¹⁵⁴ *Ib.*, III. 383.

¹⁵⁵ *Ib.*, III. 138.

¹⁵⁶ *Ib.*, X. 85.

¹⁵⁷ *Ib.*, III. 62.

¹⁵⁸ *Ib.*, VII. 196.

From all eternitee, for none I know
 Second to me or like, equal much less;
 How have I then with whom to hold converse
 Save with the creatures which I made, and those
 To me inferior, infinite descents
 Beneath what other creatures are to thee?¹⁵⁹

Who is it that speaks this? It cannot be God the Father, because he has never been seen or heard, as Milton asserts. Yet the being is called "the Almighty." Adam also calls this divine presence his "Maker," etc. The speaker must be the Word, the Son, he who brought the world into existence; and he is identified with the Father. We read that God knows no other who is not infinite descents beneath himself. But surely one would not say that he who "substantially expressed" the Father, that he who is the heir of all his might, who is his radiant image, is infinite flights below him, or that he who, being the divine similitude, makes visible what by deity God invisibly is, and he in whom all the Father shines, is such. And we find throughout that Milton speaks in this way concerning the Word, and, to a lesser extent, of the Spirit. The Word and Spirit are simply God apparent.

Milton's conception of the Holy Spirit is peculiarly similar to that of Servetus:

Nor has the word *spirit* any other meaning in the sacred writings, but that breath of life which we inspire, or the vital, or sensitive, or rational faculty, or some action or affection belonging to those faculties.¹⁶⁰

The name *spirit* is also frequently applied to God and angels, and to the human mind. When the phrase, the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit, occurs in the Old Testament, it is to be variously interpreted; sometimes it signifies God the Father himself . . . sometimes the power and virtue of the Father, and particularly that divine breath or influence by which every thing is created and nourished.¹⁶¹ . . . Sometimes it means an angel. . . . Sometimes it means Christ. . . . Sometimes it means that impulse or voice of God by which the prophets were inspired. . . . Undoubtedly neither David nor any other Hebrew, under the Old Covenant, believed in the personality of that *good* and *Holy Spirit*, unless perhaps as an angel.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ *Ib.*, VIII. 403 ff.

¹⁶⁰ *P. W.*, IV. 188.

¹⁶¹ This is the vitalizing aspect of God.

¹⁶² *Ib.*, 151.

Nothing can be more certain than that all these passages [quoted by Milton from the Scripture], and many others of a similar kind in the Old Testament were understood of the virtue and power of the Father. . . .

So likewise under the Gospel, what is called the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, sometimes means the Father himself . . . sometimes . . . the virtue and power of the Father.¹⁶³

The Spirit signifies a divine impulse, or light or voice, or word, transmitted from above either through Christ, who is the Word of God, or by some other channel.¹⁶⁴

It appears to me, that these and similar passages cannot be considered as referring to the express person of the Spirit, both because the Spirit was not yet given, and because Christ alone, as has been said above, is, properly speaking, and, in the primary sense, the Word of God.¹⁶⁵

The Spirit signifies the person itself of the Holy Spirit, or its symbol. . . . Lastly it signifies the donation of the spirit itself, and of its attendant gifts.¹⁶⁶

It is evident in the last two quotations that Milton has there in mind a being different from that of the preceding passages, where the Spirit is the virtue and the power of the Father, a breath, an impulse, or the influence by which everything is created and nourished. The former is the general spirit of God, the latter the special or the Holy Ghost, "promised alike and given, to all beleivers."¹⁶⁷ One is the pre-Gospel, the other the Gospel Spirit, the latter of which has personality. The former is a member of the modal Trinity. The general spirit of God and the Word were in existence from the beginning.¹⁶⁸ But the Holy Ghost and the Son—the man Jesus—became manifest only in the time of the Gospel. The Spirit, we see, was nothing in itself previous to that time—it was merely the virtue and power of God, his vitalizing force or mode of revelation. When Milton says that God sent his Word and Spirit to create new worlds, he merely tells us that God himself went into the Deep in the modes of energizing and vitalizing power.

There can be no doubt—from the following as well as from many other passages in Milton—that he conceived of the general spirit of God as being God himself, a mode in which the Deity made and makes itself manifest:

¹⁶³ *Ib.*, 153–4.

¹⁶⁵ *Ib.*, *loc. cit.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ib.*, 155.

¹⁶⁶ *Ib.*, 156.

With regard to the annunciation made to Joseph and Mary, the Holy Spirit . . . is not to be understood with reference to his own person alone. . . . For it is certain that, in the Old Testament, under the name of the Spirit of God, or of the Holy Spirit, either God the Father himself, or his divine power was signified.¹⁶⁹ . . . "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"; that is, his divine power, rather than any person.¹⁷⁰ I am inclined to believe . . . that it is the Father himself who is here (Matt. xii, 31, 32) called the Holy Spirit.¹⁷¹

And in *Paradise Lost* we read:

But on the wat'rie calme
His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspred,
And vital vertue infus'd, and vital warmth
Throughout the fluid Mass, but downward purged
The black tartareous, cold, infernal dregs
Adverse to life.¹⁷²

That the Miltonic and Servetian doctrines in regard to the Holy Spirit and the Holy Ghost are remarkably similar must be evident.

Should we be hypercritical, it might occur to us that when Milton calls the Son or Spirit *God*, he is merely applying to them an idea elaborated in the *Christian Doctrine*, and already referred to above:

Those who maintain the Father and the Son to be one in essence . . . say that the Son is not only called God, but also Jehovah, as appears from a comparison of several passages in both Testaments. Now¹⁶⁷ Jehovah is the supreme God; therefore the Son and Father are one in essence. It will be easy, however, to expose the weakness of an argument derived from the ascription of the name of Jehovah to the Son. For the name of Jehovah is conceded even to the angels in the same sense as it has been already shewn that the name of God is applied to them, namely, when they represent the divine presence and person and utter the very words of Jehovah.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁷ *P. L.*, XII. 519, 20.

¹⁶⁸ Both Servetus and Milton similarly define *eternity* and *from the beginning* to mean "a very long time" or "from the foundation of the visible universe." Cf. *De Error.*, 80 b, 81 a; *P. W.*, IV. 23; 131.

¹⁶⁹ *P. W.*, IV. 163.

¹⁷⁰ *Ib.*, 175.

¹⁷¹ *Ib.*, 166.

¹⁷² *P. L.*, VII. 234.

¹⁷³ *P. W.*, IV. 119-20.

Now if Milton called the Word or the Son *God*, in *Paradise Lost*, merely because he represented the divine presence, the theory of a modal Trinity was not at the basis of Milton's conception of Deity—nor, indeed, any kind of Trinity. But there are reasons for considering such an objection without foundation. The being who pronounces doom upon Adam and Eve in *Genesis* is called God (3:16–21), and so we might suppose that Milton, too, would be compelled to assign him that name on scriptural authority. But upon the same authority, Milton should have made the same being who pronounced the curse upon Adam and Eve drive them out of the Garden. (Gen. 3:23, 24). But he does not do so—it is Michael who performs the latter task. Milton has many angels in *Paradise Lost*, and they are often representatives of God, yet they are all distinct individualities. Raphael, especially, holds a discourse through several books, in which he speaks the words commanded him by God. But Raphael, Michael, Abdiel, etc., are never in any way identified or confused with the Deity; it must be evident that they sustain a relationship to Jehovah so different from that of the Word and Spirit as to be in no essential way comparable to it. It was under pressure of argument, and to prove that Jesus was not equal to the Father, that Milton said in *The Christian Doctrine* that angels are called Jehovah. In *Paradise Lost*, where he could give rein to his imagination, where he could speak without obstruction, and where he was treating the pre-Gospel Trinity, we can believe that he expressed the basic and imaginative conceptions of his theology, without being hampered by opposition. When he called the Word or Spirit "God," "the Almighty," "the Maker," "the Creator," etc., we may conclude that he meant them to be what he calls them, not mere representatives.

To sum up, then, we have found that Milton conceives of a pre-Gospel Trinity exactly like Servetus'; that God the Father is the same with both—the universe; that both believe the Word to hold the same strikingly unique relation to the Father; that both differentiate similarly between the general and special spirit of God; that the former is the vivifying force in the cosmos; and that Jesus Christ, the humanized Word, is a *man*.

The rationalism of these doctrines is apparent. Servetus proclaimed the efficacy and validity of man's reason. While

retaining his absolute faith in the divine authorship and authority of the Scriptures, he shaped the teachings of the church, even while retaining most of their essential features, into something which the mind can lay hold of, conceive, understand. Milton, likewise a tremendous rationalist, eagerly laid hold on a doctrine which satisfied the craving of his intellect without wholly invalidating the redemptive purposes of Christianity.

E. 'Milton's Muse

Until a comparatively short time ago, I never had any accurate conception of what it was that Milton had in mind when he addressed his Muse, his Urania, "the meaning, not the name." I have come to believe that the conception of a modal Godhead is the explanation of this Muse, for

Heavenlie borne
Before the Hills appeerd, or Fountaine flow'd,
Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy Sister.¹⁷⁴

Servetus said:

Before creation was, God was; but neither was he Light, nor Word, nor Spirit, but some ineffable thing else—these, Light, Word, Spirit, being mere dispensations, modes, or expressions of pre-existing Deity.¹⁷⁵

Is not Urania the Holy Spirit, who, before the creation of the material universe, conversed with the Word, that is, dwelt with her? In the first book, there can be no doubt as to what Milton means; he is here addressing the vitalizing spirit of God, which is God himself:

Sing, Heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,
In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth
Rose out of Chaos.¹⁷⁶

Many passages in *Paradise Lost* become greatly clarified when we know the theological and philosophical conceptions that lie behind them. In the passage just cited Milton is addressing the

¹⁷⁴ *P. L.*, VII. 7.

¹⁷⁵ Willis, 56.

¹⁷⁶ *P. L.*, I. 6.

general spirit of God; now his address turns to the Holy Ghost, who was manifested only in the Gospel times, although created before:¹⁷⁷

But chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples, th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st.¹⁷⁸

In his last book, Servetus has much to say of the increased light and its energizing power, which is an expression of God. In the *De Erroribus* also we find that "Christ is like the face of the sun in the midst of immensity and inaccessible light."¹⁷⁹ The Word seems to be considered the divine light brought forth to bring life out of the Deep, out of the darkness waste and wild. We saw before that Servetus' conception of God before any creation took place was that he was neither "Light, Word, nor Spirit, but some ineffable thing else," etc. The fact probably is that Milton, by God, Light, Spirit, and Word, means the same thing—they are only different aspects of Deity. When we have come to understand this the magnificent passage at the beginning of Book III. of *Paradise Lost* no longer remains in the region of the mystic:

Hail, holy light, ofspring of Heav'n first-born
Or of the Eternal, Coeternal beam
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,
And never but in unapproach'd light
Dwelt from Eternitie, dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.
Or hear'st thou rather pure Ethereal stream
Whose fountain who shall tell? before the Sun,
Before the Heav'ns thou wert, and at the voice
Of God, as with a mantle didst invest
The rising world of waters dark and deep,
Won from the void and formless infinite.¹⁸⁰

Milton again and again calls the Word, or Christ, the first-born:¹⁸¹ now he calls light first-born: it must be that Christ is identified with light. He starts his invocation to that manifestation of God which is the

Bright effluence of bright essence increate,

¹⁷⁷ Cf. *P. W.*, IV, 169.

¹⁸⁰ *P. L.*, III. 1.

¹⁷⁸ *P. L.*, I. 17.

¹⁸¹ Cf. *Ib.*, V. 830-42; *P. W.*, IV. 80-1.

¹⁷⁹ *De Error.*, 107 a.

or the Word. And in line 7, he turns his address from the energizing to the vitalizing power of God, the Spirit. Here it is quite clear to whom he refers. Finally, in the first book of *Paradise Regained*, the object of Milton's invocation is not less clear; and here it is direct:

Thou Spirit, who ledst this glorious eremite
 Into the desert
 inspire
 As thou art wont, my prompted song.

Thus we find that Milton's Muse is nothing less than God himself, a God that is a *modal* Trinity.

That there is some kind of relation between Milton and Servetus I am unable to doubt. That both are imbued with the great philosophy of the sixteenth century—pantheism—which sees in all living and moving things the spirit of God which is God himself, and in all forms of existence the very substance of God himself is a fact. That certain distinctive interpretations given to questions of Christian dogma by Servetus appear in Milton is also true. And we cannot doubt that Milton may well have known the *De Erroribus* at first hand and been influenced by it.

Whatever one's conclusion may be as to the direct influence of Servetus on Milton, the parallels which have been traced in the present paper are of value in enabling us to define more clearly Milton's theological conceptions and to relate them to the history of Christian dogma. They also illustrate the similarity of result produced when humanistic ethics, Renaissance philosophy, and scriptural Christianity unite in sincere, progressive, and profound minds.

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